

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 ISTANB 01339 021310Z  
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 HA-05 /084 W  
-----129748 021333Z /50

R 021244Z MAY 78  
FM AMCONSUL ISTANBUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9915  
INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA  
AMCONSUL IZMIR  
AMCONSUL ADANA  
AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ISTANBUL 1339

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, PINT, TU  
SUBJECT: MAY FIRST PEACEFUL IN ISTANBUL

SUMMARY: MAY 1 LABOR RALLY IN ISTANBUL'S TAKSIM SQUARE WAS WELL-ORGANIZED, DISCIPLINED AFFAIR WITH PERHAPS 100,000 ATTENDING. SECURITY PROVIDED BY AUTHORITIES WAS EXTRAORDINARILY TIGHT. THERE WERE NO INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE ASSOCIATED WITH RALLY, WHICH WAS LARGEST MAY DAY CELEBRATION IN COUNTRY. FACT THAT EVENT PASSED WITHOUT INCIDENT SHOULD HELP RESTORE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE THAT GOT IS CAPABLE OF CONTROLLING POLITICAL VIOLENCE PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

1. LAST YEAR'S MAY DAY LABOR RALLY IN CITY'S CENTRAL TAKSIM SQUARE BECAME BLOODBATH WHEN SHOOTING BROKE OUT AND SOME 37 PEOPLE WERE KILLED AND HUNDREDS WOUNDED. THIS YEAR ISTANBUL'S RESIDENTS EXPECTED THE WORST AS LEFTIST DISK LABOR CONFEDERATION WHICH SPONSORED LAST YEAR'S EVENT PLANNED SIMILAR DEMONSTRATION FOR 1978. RUMORS WERE RAMPANT THAT VIOLENCE WOULD  
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EXCEED EVEN THAT OF 1977. GOT HAD VACILLATED WITH OFFICIALS ASSERTING AT VARIOUS POINTS DURING PRECEDING WEEKS THAT THERE WOULD BE NO RALLY IN TAKSIM. FINALLY, HOWEVER, NEW DISK PRESIDENT, ABDULLAH BASTURK, WORKED OUT TERMS WITH GOT WHEREBY DEMONSTRATION WOULD TAKE PLACE BUT UNDER VERY STRICT SECURITY MEASURES.

2. MORNING OF MAY 1, CITY LOOKED LIKE IT WAS AWAITING THE APOCALYPSE. STREETS WERE NEARLY DESERTED AND EVEN ALONG BOSPHORUS, FAR FROM TAKSIM, TRAFFIC WAS MINIMAL. JANDARMA TROOPS CONTROLLED ALL ENTRANCES TO TAKSIM, WHILE POLICE FRISKED EVERYONE WHO GOT NEAR SQUARE AT LEAST ONCE AND USUALLY SEVERAL TIMES. MORE TROOPS INCLUDING FIRST ARMY UNITS WERE ON ALERT AROUND CITY. IN ADDITION, SOME 75,000 PRADE MARSHALS FROM DISK WERE ON DUTY TO POLICE RALLY.

3. DESPITE PARTICIPATION OF DOZENS OF LEFTIST ASSOCIATIONS AND PROFESSIONAL GROUPS AND SEVERAL SMALL MARXIST PARTIES, CROWD THAT FINALLY FILED INTO TAKSIM WAS SMALLER THAN LAST YEAR. BY MOST ACCOUNTS, THERE WERE ABOUT 100,000 WHEREAS IN 1977 MORE THAN 150,000 SHOWED UP. MANY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS WERE UNDOUBTEDLY AFRAID TO RISK A REPETITION OF LAST YEAR'S HORROR. ALTHOUGH CONTACTS FROM TURK-IS, COUNTRY'S LARGEST AND MORE MODERATE LABOR CONFEDERATION, HAD ASSURED US THAT ALL OF THEIR PEOPLE WOULD STAY AWAY FROM TAKSIM, NEWSPAPERS REPORT THAT MEMBERS FROM TURK-IS AFFILIATED PETROLEUM WORKERS (PETROL-IS) AND AIRLINE WORKERS (HAVA-IS) ATTENDED. INVITED GUESTS WHO SHARED PODIUM WITH DISK LEADERS INCLUDED NUMBER OF REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY POLITICIANS INCLUDING TWO-DOZEN DEPUTIES, MAYOR KOTIL, FORMER-MAYOR ISVAN, AND PROVINCIAL PARTY CHIEF.

4. THEMES OF MAY 1 RALLY IN TAKSIM WERE DECIDEDLY LEFTIST.  
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CHANTS AND POSTERS WERE ANTI-FASCIST, PRO-SOCIALIST, ANTI-IMPERIALIST, ETC. PHOTOGRAPHS OF EVENT SHOW SINGS CALLING FOR LEGALIZING COMMUNIST PARTY: OPEN DISPLAY OF THIS POSITION WAS NOT EVIDENT DURING LAST YEAR'S RALLY. IN HIS SPEECH TO THE RALLY BASTURK ISSUED LIMITED ENDORSEMENT OF THE ECEVIT GOVERNMENT SAYING DISK WOULD SUPPORT ITS ANTI-FASCIST AND PRO-LABOR MEASURES. AFTER BASTURK'S SPEECH, ALL PARTICIPANTS BEGAN PEACEFULLY LEAVING TAKSIM AROUND 5:00 P.M.

5. COMMENT: MINISTER OF INTERIOR TERMED FACT THAT RALLY WAS CONDUCTED WITHOUT INCIDENT A SIGN OF "GREAT PROGRESS" FOR TURKEY. GIVEN GENERAL EXPECTATION OF DISASTER, WE TEND TO AGREE. IT IS TOO EARLY, OF COURSE, TO PROJECT FROM THIS NOE NOTABLE SUCCESS; BUT PERHAPS ISTANBUL'S PEACEFUL MAY DAY WILL MARK DEPARTURE POINT FROM WHICH GOT CAN BRING COUNTRY'S POLITICAL VIOLENCE PROBLEM UNDER CONTROL. CERTAINLY FACT THAT NO ONE WAS HURT AT TAKSIM WILL DO SOMETHING TOWARD RESTORING PUBLIC'S CONFIDENCE THAT GOT IS CAPABLE OF ACCOMPLISHING THIS TASK.

HOUGHTON

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## Message Attributes

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